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A Study of Why Some Learners are More Successful than Others at Acquiring a Second Language: The Roles of Personality, Attitude & Motivation

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1986

A STUDY OF WHY SOME LEARNERS ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN
OTHERS AT ACQUIRING A SECOND LANGUAGE: THE ROLES OF
PERSONALITY, ATTITUDE, AND MOTIVATION

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of English

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Azah Yusof

May 1986

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OTHERS AT ACQUIRING A SECOND LANGUAGE: THE ROLES OF
PERSONALITY, ATTITUDE, AND MOTIVATION

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The purpose of this thesis is to convey and to support my belief that learners' affective domain, which consist of their personalities, attitudes, and motivation are responsible for causing the variation in the levels of second language proficiency of second language learners. My concern is to point out or support others who believe that second language learners are not machines that are able and willing to be programmed; they have feelings and attitudes which in turn govern their personalities and motivation. I also believe that the main focus of second language teaching should be on the "persons" learning the language, instead of merely on the forms, rules, and structures of the second language itself. I hope that this study will provide insights to all second language teachers.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

AFFECTIVE VARIABLES AND SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

One of the major differences between first and second language acquisition is that while all normal human beings achieve an acceptable level of proficiency in their first language, the degree of proficiency they achieve when learning a second language is varied. Therefore, an important question that is often asked, especially by second language teachers, is why some second language learners acquire the target language with greater success than other learners. Factors such as age, intelligence, environment, methods of instructions, and learners' affective variables have been said to be responsible in explaining the variation in learners' second language proficiency. However, this study focuses on the roles of affective variables as a factor that explains why some second language learners attain a higher level of second language

proficiency than others. This chapter explains the components and the importance of affective variables--specifically personality, attitude, and motivation.

Affective variables are factors which deal with learners' feelings--the emotions of pleasure and displeasure that surround the task of second language learning (Thomas Scovel 131). To discuss the affective variables of learners is to take into consideration factors that make learners who they are--factors such as their personality, attitude, and motivation. In other words, to understand the affective domain of learners is to understand the emotions, thoughts, behaviors, backgrounds, and intentions that learners bring into the language learning environment. The study of affective variables views every learner as a unique individual, and it is concerned with the "human factors" of learners. Learners are only human--their emotions govern their behaviors in any given task, including learning a second language.

The study of affective variables is important, because it takes into consideration that learners are not just cognitive entities; they have and exhibit affective or emotional states in their personality, motivation, and attitudes (David Ausubel and Floyd Robinson 351). The awareness and knowledge concerning

learners' affective states allow language teachers to focus their teaching on the "persons" who are trying to learn the target language, instead of just on the "content" of the language itself. Most importantly, learners' affective variables are largely responsible for causing the differences in their behaviors which in turn produce differences in their levels of second language proficiency (John Oller and Kyle Perkins 90).

To explain the differences in learners' levels of proficiency, it is first necessary to explain Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (101), which accounts for the relationship between affective variables and second language acquisition. According to this hypothesis, every learner has a "socio-affective filter"--a term developed by Heidi Dulay and Marina Burt (99). The hypothesis states that learners with high or strong filters allow less language "input" from their environment; therefore, they acquire less of the language exposed to them. On the other hand, learners with low filters are more "open" or "tuned-in" to the language exposed to them, and as a result they acquire more of the language. This filter is made up of learners' affective variables, and it acts as a "gate," so to speak, that can be opened wide for more "input" or slightly opened for less "input." The knowledge concerning the nature

and the functions of the affective filter allows language teachers to understand learners' positive and negative feelings and behaviors, as well as to help them find ways to eliminate the barriers that can impede success in second language learning.

Obviously, language teachers are expected not only to know the rules and structure of the language but also to know their students and to know them well. In second language teaching and learning, affective variables must not be ignored, for these variables are responsible for facilitating or preventing success in second language acquisition and for the variation in the degree of proficiency attained by second language learners. Understanding the affective domain of learners is not an easy task, but it needs to be done if teachers want their students to "acquire" the target language and not just to memorize the forms, structures, and rules of that language. Therefore, it is important for teachers to always be aware that the language learners entering the classroom are unique individuals--individuals that are the product of their native cultures and of their own experiences. Specifically, teachers need to know and be aware of their students' personality, attitude and motivation in order to allow the students to acquire the target language successfully.

Before discussing in detail various personality traits of learners, it is first important to note the feelings that learners experience in the language learning process and to explain how these feelings affect their psychological and emotional states. This discussion will make up Chapter Two. Specifically, the chapter discusses the threats of second language learning on one's ego or identity and explains the notions of "language ego" and the importance of "permeability of ego boundaries." The chapter stresses the point that second language learning can be threatening to one's personality and that learners are required to have strong and permeable ego boundaries to survive those threats.

Chapter Three focuses on two of the most common feelings that learners experience in second language learning--fear and anxiety--and explores various personality traits that accompany these feelings. The interesting nature and the importance of the empathic capacity is also discussed here, together with some suggestions on how teachers can better handle the different personalities of their students.

Chapter Four deals with learners' attitudes toward the second language and the speakers of that language. The definition, importance, causes, and effects of learners' attitudes on second language learning are

thoroughly explained here. This chapter focuses on the influences of a society's attitudes on the members of that society and on the causes and effects of negative attitudes toward the second language and its speakers.

Chapter Five is about learners' motivation. Here, the definition as well as the importance of motivation are included. Then, several factors that influence motivation together with various views on motivation are also explained. Finally, this chapter discusses the types of resistance in second language learning.

The concluding chapter offers a few suggestions for possible future research that needs to be conducted concerning these affective variables.

This study attempts to help language teachers understand not only "how" a second language is acquired but also "why" some learners are more successful than others at acquiring the second language. Teachers who are truly concerned about their students' learning progress rather than about which methods or materials to use should want to understand the roles of affective variables in the process of second language acquisition. This study offers some guidelines to all concerned teachers.

CHAPTER TWO

SECOND LANGUAGE THREATS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF STRONG AND PERMEABLE EGO

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, one of the affective variables of learners is personality. However, before discussing the specific positive or negative personality traits involved in second language learning, it is necessary to understand the concept of personality itself. According to the Holodynamic Model, personality is a system that connects one's internal structure (ego) with the external environment (the world) (Alatis 70). To understand one's personality, it is therefore necessary to explain the factors that shape one's personality. To relate one's ego to second language learning, this chapter discusses the notions and the importance of "language ego" and of the "permeability of ego boundaries." And to further explain these notions, this chapter also discusses the effects of second language learning on one's ego and on one's views of the environment, i.e., its effects on one's personality. The discussion in this chapter

attempts to point out the fact that second language learning poses a threat to one's ego, to emphasize the importance of a strong ego and self-concept to withstand this threat, and to note the importance of permeability of ego boundaries in second language learning. The following discussion explores the fact that because one's language is intensely personal, learning a second language can be very demanding and stressful to one's ego and world, i.e., to one's personality.

2.1 PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

First of all, we need to know how personality is shaped and developed; but unfortunately, it is not easy to describe the process of personality development precisely. However, it is common knowledge that the process of personality development starts early in one's childhood and is influenced by many interacting factors, such as family upbringing, tradition, culture, education, religion, etc. Nevertheless, the most common explanations are those related to nature and nurture. Edward Sapir says, "The genesis of personality is in all probability determined largely by the anatomical and physiological make-up of the individual" (167). However, as we all know,

personality is also shaped by one's environment, especially the early childhood environment. Therefore, Sapir further notes that "conditioning factors...must be considered as at least important in the development of personality as innate biological factors" (168). And obviously, the conditioning factors include the environment. The nature of an environment does indeed play an important role in the shaping and forming of one's personality; for instance, every individual is influenced by the culture of his/her native/mother land, and every society has its own way of thinking and living. Also, one should realize that every family in any type of society has its own unique rules and tradition and its own way of raising children. Because there are various interacting factors involved in the genesis of personality, it is therefore not easy for one to explain in detail why people behave and think the way they do; we can make only broad generalizations about how one's personality will develop.

2.2 LANGUAGE EGO AND THE PERMEABILITY OF EGO BOUNDARIES

To explain the relation of one's ego to language learning, Alexander Guiora has formulated the concept of "language ego" development, which he says is similar

to the development of language boundaries: "In a manner similar to the concept of body ego, language ego too is conceived as a maturation concept and refers to a self-representation with physical outlines and boundaries. Grammar and syntax are the solid structures on which speech hangs, lexis the flesh that gives it body, and pronunciation its very core" (Guiora, Brannon, & Dull 112). To further explain Guiora's concept of "language ego," John H. Schumann states: "In the course of general ego development, the lexis, syntax, morphology, and phonology of the individual's language acquire physical outlines and form boundaries. In the early formative stages of ego development, the language barriers fluctuate, but once ego development is completed, the permeability of the boundaries is sharply restricted" (222).

In other words, as people mature, their language ego slowly develops, and during this time, the ego and language ego are flexible and permeable; however, once the development process stops, they slowly become more rigid. Thus the developed or "rigid" language ego of adults makes it more difficult for them to allow new language development, therefore making it harder for them to simply slip into the language learning process. Conversely, the flexible ego and language ego of children enable them to allow easier permeability of

language boundaries, and as a result they have less difficulty learning a new language. The differences in ease/difficulty of second language learning is different not only between adults and children but also among individual learners. As Betty Robinett says, "Some students can throw themselves into the experience of language learning and forget their self-restraints or pride; others find it difficult and often impossible" (40). The uncomfortable experience of those learners who find language learning "difficult" or "impossible" is therefore caused by their already rigid ego. This experience is certainly not a pleasant one, and unless the learner is able to quickly overcome this negative feeling, he/she may experience more ego-adjustment problems later.

2.3 THE EFFECTS OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING ON ONE'S EGO

Second language learning can be a demanding and stressful process, primarily because it poses a threat to one's ego and identity and because it tends to alienate one from his/her own native language and culture. This threat exists mainly because one's language is "intensely personal" (Guiora and Acton 198). Guiora and Acton explain that "...the task of

learning a second language poses a challenge to the integrity of one's basic identification" (111). Because the process itself is a threat to one's identity, one is challenged to adjust one's self-concept. This challenge exists whether the learning process takes place in one's homeland or in the target language environment. However, as mentioned earlier, a "rigid" or developed self-concept is difficult to adjust or change.

Second language learning also tends to alienate one from his/her own identity and to require one to take on a "new" identity. As Guiora and Acton point out, "to engage in learning a second language is to step into a new world. This act of extending the self so as to take on a new identity is...an important factor in second language learning" (111). To take on a "new" identity is not an easy task, because one usually has a strong bond to his/her native language and society, and taking on this "new" identity may jeopardize this bond. As Charles Findley says, "Studying language in a foreign country or in a foreign classroom within one's own country generally isolates the student from the family and community that provided a sense of belonging and security. Language learning is disruptive; the student can easily and quickly experience insecurity and loss of identity" (70).

Understandably, this act of temporarily leaving one's self aside, so to speak, is indeed fearful, and not every learner can comfortably and easily adjust to the so-called "new" identity. This demand is a threat to one's sense of security. Findley therefore emphasizes that "the concept of self-identity, the representation, and acting out in relation to pattern labelled 'self' can be functionally equated with an individual security system" (70). Thus, learners, especially adults, may feel uncomfortable, afraid, and anxious, particularly during the initial period of the learning process, because they already have a familiar language and their self-concept or self-identity is already developed and secured.

If the learning process takes place in the target language society, learners can be easily discouraged by the feeling of "alienness" and by the differences between the native and the target cultures. The learners need to possess a great amount of patience and perseverance, while others around them have to be very understanding and supportive.

For those learning a second language in their native land, the initial shock and threat to their ego and identity is not as intense as the one experienced by those learning a second language in the target environment. Perhaps this is caused by the lack of the

immediate need to learn the second language, since they can still use their native language to survive. However, the problem of identity crisis and of alienation may arise during instances in which learners have the desire to use the target language but are deliberately or subconsciously prevented or discouraged from doing so by their peers and family, who may not speak a second language or be interested in learning one. Therefore, if and when such learners use the target language, they may send out signals that might be misinterpreted as a desire to isolate or separate themselves from the native language or culture. These somewhat unclear messages may create a "distance" (i.e., alienation) between the "self" and the "community" of the learners, thus jeopardizing the feelings of security and belongingness mentioned earlier.

Naturally, some learners are inevitably threatened by the unfamiliar sounds of another language, by the challenge of taking on a new identity, and by the feeling of losing their sense of belonging to the native language and society. These threats come with the territory of second language learning, but they can negatively affect the learners' progress and level of proficiency if they are not controlled or overcome in as little time as possible. It is therefore extremely

important for us to realize that language learners bring with them a personality structure that is both the product of their primary culture and of their own experiences. And the fact that they have already developed their own self-concept or identity makes learning a second language even more difficult and complicated.

2.4 SUGGESTIONS

As the above discussion suggests, the affective states of learners in the language learning process can be traumatic. One way to minimize the agony and difficulty of learning a second language is to create a conducive and unthreatening environment. For example, to deal with the sensitive ego of learners, teachers themselves have to be sensitive to the psychological and emotional changes that learners experience. Robinett states, "If students find themselves in a non-threatening classroom operated by a sensitive teacher, they will feel secure. If they are allowed to express their own ideas without biased value judgment imposed either by the teacher or other students, they will have gained a sense of identification and self-esteem" (40-41). It is important to make learners understand that they do not necessarily lose their

identity when they learn another language; in fact, they should realize that successfully knowing a second language implies that they have a well-developed, secure, and an integrated ego or sense of self and that they have a high self-esteem.

Findley offers some other suggestions which may help learners adjust their personality, if necessary, in order for them to learn the target language successfully (70-71). For instance, during the initial period of language learning, learners need a continuous flow of positive reinforcement from the environment in order to give them a sense of security of their "new" identity. In addition, establishing a feeling of community in and out of the language class can partially compensate for the possible loss of security experienced by learners. Also, it is crucial for the self-concept of learners to be broad enough to make room for changes in self-image and temporary loss of self-esteem that are often encountered by adults learners. But most importantly, learners need to experience a sense of worth, security, warmth, and understanding from the people in the language learning environment--a safe, friendly atmosphere helps learners cope with the difficulty of second language learning. Robinett suggests that teachers need to make their students feel at home, to provide them with a sense of

accomplishment, and to be sensitive and patient with their students' cultural and linguistic problems (40).

2.5 CONCLUSION

Because of the demanding and stressful nature of language learning, learners are required to have a strong self-concept. More importantly, they need one that is flexible enough to withstand frequent adjustment and modification to allow the permeability of ego boundaries necessary in the process of second language learning. As Guiora and Acton state, "To have permeable ego boundaries entails having a well defined, secure, integrated ego or sense of self in the first place" (199). Nonetheless, we always should bear in mind that to understand the nature and the functions of learners' personalities on second language learning, we cannot separate learners' "ego" or the "self" from their first language and society and from other factors that make learners who they are, i.e., their cultural and personal experiences in the world.

CHAPTER THREE

FEAR, ANXIETY, AND THE EMPATHIC CAPACITY

As discussed in the previous chapter, various emotional and psychological changes occur in the process of learning a second language. Due to the demanding and stressful nature of the process, learners often feel frustrated and discouraged. The emotional and psychological changes may negatively affect the personality of some learners, and as a result may slow down their learning progress. On the other hand, some learners with certain personality traits may handle and cope with the changes well, thus allowing them to progress at a faster and smoother rate. However, because of the rigidity of people's egos, it is not easy to change their personalities.

Therefore, this chapter discusses the difficulty of changing one's personality. It focuses on the sources and consequences of the two most common feelings experienced by language learners--fear and anxiety. The nature and the importance of empathic

capacity are discussed here as well. Finally, some suggestions for dealing with learners' fears and anxieties are also included here.

3.1 DEVELOPED EGO AND RIGID PERSONALITY

According to Oller, "The more a learner is self-confident, extroverted, friendly, and willing to take the social risks involved in conversing with speakers of the target language, the more rapid will be his or her progress and the higher will be his ultimate level of attainment of proficiency in that language..." (178). Unfortunately, not everyone has such personality traits, and trying to change individuals' personality in order to help them be successful language learners is not an easy task. One of the main reasons for this difficulty is related to the notion of the "permeability of ego boundaries" mentioned earlier. This means that since adult learners have already developed their own self-concept, behavior, attitude, etc., it is hard for them to change their personality. For example, a learner is not expected to change from being shy to becoming an extroverted person overnight.

Another factor that should be considered is that learners' personality structures are shaped and influenced by their environment, especially their

culture. For instance some cultures, e.g., the American culture, view assertive and extroversion as positive or desirable traits, while other cultures, e.g., the Japanese culture, may consider these traits impolite or too forward. Therefore, even though some traits are more desirable than others in language learning, not every learner has or can produce those traits, simply because some learners are not brought up in such a way or because they refuse to go against the rules of their cultures. It is therefore impossible for learners to change their personality over a short period of time, and more importantly, teachers cannot expect them to do so. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that teachers and learners cannot help each other and themselves in understanding one another and in promoting suitable personality traits that can facilitate success in language learning.

Two of the most common feelings experienced by learners when learning a second language are fear and anxiety, and some of the personality traits that accompany these feelings are shyness, inhibition, alienation, assertiveness, non-assertiveness, introversion, and extroversion. Fear is often associated with shyness, inhibition, alienation, non-assertiveness, and introversion; whereas anxiety is often related to extroversion and assertiveness.

Extroverted and assertive learners are usually sensitive to and perceptive of the people in their environment and the language exposed to them; i.e., they have a high level of empathy, which is one of the important requirements for oral communication.

Generally, in second language learning, extroversion and assertiveness are the more desirable personality traits than shyness, inhibition, alienation, and non-assertiveness.

3.2 SOURCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF FEAR

As mentioned earlier, one of the most common feelings experienced by learners in the language learning process is fear, and the feeling comes from several sources. One source of fear is the unfamiliar sounds and rules of the second language itself. Another source may be related to the atmosphere of the classroom; for example, a tense and an uncomfortable classsroom makes learners nervous, thus making them afraid to participate in the language learning activities. If the environment is a foreign country, the feeling of "alienness" and the differences between the learners' culture and the second culture can also be a source of fear. Sometimes, teachers can also be a source of fear, especially if they appear strict and

unfriendly and if they do not understand or cannot relate to the difficulties faced by their students. Learners sometimes view their teachers as "monsters" who watch over every move they make and who wait for them to make a mistake when they use the target language. Learners who see their teachers in such a way (and there are learners who do) are constantly afraid of their teachers, and this fear will create a distance between the learners and the teachers, thus resulting in an unhealthy relationship between them.

To explain the sources of fear in second language learning, Jenifer Lucas suggests the notion of "comprehension apprehension," which she says is "a generalized anxiety or fear about oral communication. Typically, it gives rise to a consistent pattern of communication avoidance or withdrawal from situations where communication is likely to occur" (593). In relation to the notion of communication apprehension, Lucas explains that many people are afraid of being negatively evaluated by others; they are afraid of failure in social situations, for instance of not knowing what to say or how to say it, or of becoming tongue-tied (593). Furthermore, Lucas explains that some individuals are afraid of being rejected by someone they like (e.g., their peers) or by someone in authority (e.g., their teachers or parents.) As a

result, they either struggle to improve themselves or avoid using the target language as a way of avoiding mistakes. These are just some of the more common reasons for learners' fear.

The important point is that once teachers understand why their students are afraid and what they are afraid of, perhaps they can find ways to minimize or eliminate the fears that can impede learners' learning progress. Unfortunately, not all learners are willing to admit their fears to themselves and to others, and the longer they try to ignore the feeling, the harder it will be to overcome it. It is therefore important for learners to be honest with themselves and with their teachers about their fear, because kept or hidden fears can only hurt their learning progress.

How does fear affect learners' personality? Or how do learners react to their fears? Depending upon how learners handle them, fears may have a negative or positive affect on learners. For instance, learners may use fear as an excuse for their slow learning progress, for a bad grade, or for not liking the language course. On the other hand, they may use fear as an ego defense mechanism; for example, to employ aggressive behavior as a way of gaining self-confidence or to motivate themselves to improve their skills after receiving a bad grade. Thus, learners have the choice

of using fear as a helpful "ego booster" or of letting themselves be ruled and governed by fear itself. But teachers can help their students in handling their fear by providing support and understanding and by creating a secure and trustful environment that will allow learners to build and retain their self-esteem.

Fear is often related to shyness, inhibition, and non-assertiveness or introversion. However, it is difficult to precisely define and to explain these traits separately because each trait is closely related to one another. Ralf Schwarzer notes that

Fearfulness as an inherited trait and public self-consciousness as an environmental trait may be two sources of trait shyness, which attains its peak degree during adolescence. Low self-esteem and low sociability may be two additional causes....Shyness can be regarded as inhibition, tension, and anxiety preoccupation in the presence of an audience. Shy people tend to be less friendly, outgoing, warm, and talkative.... (9)

Kenneth Chastain notes that "some students are so shy, so timid, and so unsure of themselves...that attempting to communicate in a second language can be traumatic" (154). Shy individuals are usually non-assertive, and they tend to avoid interactions with others, especially

in the target language. They are afraid to reveal themselves to others and to make mistakes.

Closely related to shyness is another personality trait which is a form of ego protection known as inhibition. Guiora et al. believe that heightened levels of inhibition are equated with the rigidity of the ego boundaries (421-428), which means that individuals with a less permeable ego are usually more inhibited. Inhibited individuals do not trust others and are often afraid to be evaluated by others around them. Mary Averett and Donald McManis simply state that inhibition is a dampening process which decreases activity and new learning (1187). Since inhibition can slow down the learning progress, it is definitely not a desirable trait in second language learning. Inhibition also prevents learners from taking the risks of making mistakes and of being misunderstood by others, therefore preventing them from interacting in the target language. Shy and inhibited students should be able to trust individuals in the learning environment. As Findley says, "Trust, based on knowledge of probability, is basic to establishing risk taking behavior....Until trust is developed between student and teacher, the student will be inhibited in his performance and productive risk-taking will be low" (72).

As explained by Lucas, inhibited learners may be suffering from "communication apprehension" in which they withdraw from situations where oral communication is liable to take place. In other words, inhibited learners are considered non-assertive. They are usually unwilling to let others know how they feel or are unable to effectively communicate to others what they mean. As Joel Walz states, "Non-assertive people are those who simply fail in certain situations to communicate their thoughts and feelings" (279). In other words, inhibited and non-assertive people are introverted individuals. Ausubel and Robinson state, "The term 'introvert' refers to a person who tends to withdraw from social interaction and to be interested in his own thoughts and feelings rather than in on-going events in the world around him" (402). Walz points out that individuals who cannot learn to express their thoughts openly usually miss the chance of increasing their feelings of self-esteem and self-worth which is important, for there is a link between deficient communication skills and poor self-concept (280).

Fear also causes the feeling of alienation, and like inhibition, it is also a form of the protection of one's ego. Alienation is often used to refer to an individual's feelings of separateness from society,

nature, other people, or himself; however, the specific concern in the language class is the strangeness or separateness that the student feels toward the new society, environment, other people, and from him/herself (Findley 71). Fear of losing one's identity, native language, or culture, as we know, is part of the challenges and threats of second language learning, and if it is not carefully handled or not quickly overcome, it may lead to the feeling of alienation. There are several types of alienation, such as: 1) alienation between the critical self and the performing self, 2) between the native culture and the second culture, 3) between a learner and a teacher, and 4) between a learner and his/her peers (Alatis et al. 117).

Learners may be so overly conscious of their performance in the target language that they are afraid to use the target language, due to the fear of making mistakes or of being misunderstood. On the other hand, they might not be at all critical of themselves, and as a result they would probably use the target language and risk making mistakes and being misunderstood. It is better if learners' critical self is not alienated from their performing self, so that they can be consistently aware of (but not paranoid about) their competence and performance in the target language.

Also, the second culture can be so strange and different from the learners' native culture that it makes the learners feel "isolated" and "out-of-place." This type of alienation is usually caused by the fact that learners do not know the second culture very well or are confused about the real nature of the second culture. Alienation between the first and the target culture can make learners totally reject or avoid the second language and culture.

Alienation between cultures can also be caused by the fact that the second language culture is geographically separated from the language learners. In this case, the learners lack the input from and the interaction with the second culture, therefore making it difficult for the learners to truly understand the nature of the second language culture. In addition, this type of alienation is also related to the kinds of attitude the learners have toward the second language culture. Learners may feel alienated because they view the second language culture negatively. As Findley points out, "When one examines alienation in the language learner, the important issues are the students' attitude toward the language and the speakers of the target culture, and the degree of dissimilarity between values attributed to the target culture. If the student perceives speakers of the language as

markedly different culturally, then this will influence the degree of alienation experienced and the willingness to receive instruction in the new language" (71). As a result, the student may avoid contact with the people or object to learning the second language.

Alienation may also exist between learners and teachers. The differences between them may create a "gap" or distance that will complicate the learning process even more. Alienation between learners and teachers exists if the teachers come from a different culture than the learners, if they speak a different native language than the learners, if they do not understand the problems faced by their students in learning the second language, if they are not aware of their students' personalities, and if they are viewed as simply the persons who provide the learners with the knowledge of the structure and rules of the target language and nothing more. Alienation between learners and teachers puts a "gap" between them, and as a result creates a relationship that lacks trust. Certainly this type of alienation is not healthy for second language learning and should therefore be eliminated.

Alienation may also exist between learners and their peers, especially if their peers negatively value the importance of learning a second language, if they

do not understand and refuse to understand the nature of the second language culture, if they attempt to influence the learners to avoid learning or speaking the target language, and if they view the act of learning and using the second language as an act of abandoning or isolating themselves from the native language and culture. Some learners who think that second language learning is desirable and necessary and who are sure of themselves would not let their peers sway them into neglecting and slowing down their learning progress, even though they risk being separated and isolated from their peers. These types of learners will inevitably achieve a higher level of proficiency than other learners who may not be as strong and as sure of themselves and who may not be as serious and concerned about their learning progress, as long as they feel the sense of belongingness and security from their peers.

3.3 ANXIETY AND ITS RELATED PERSONALITY TRAITS

When learning a second language, some learners experience not only fear but also anxiety. Basically, anxiety makes people excited and uneasy in their anticipation of a task and its outcome. Titone observes that the "newness" of the second language

sounds and structures causes learners to become anxious and threatened (114). As Kenneth Chastain also observes that some students often arrive at their second language class in a near panic state (154). Interestingly, even though anxiety also contains a slight degree of fear, it is usually considered a more positive feeling than fear. This is because, as Scovel explains, anxiety is enhanced by both positive and negative motivation, and in learning a second language, just enough anxiety is required to arouse the neuromuscular system to optimal levels of performance (138).

According to Scovel, anxiety is a state of apprehension--a vague fear (134). Scovel suggests that there are two kinds of anxiety: facilitating and debilitating--facilitating anxiety enables the learner to "fight" and to approach the new learning task; debilitating anxiety, in contrast, causes the learners to "flee" and to avoid the new learning task (139). Scovel adds, "In a sense, these two aspects of anxiety fulfill a similar function to that of the two complementary components of the autonomic nervous system, the sympathetic and the parasympathetic; one arouses, the other depresses--each working together and in balance to keep the organism in tune with its everchanging environment" (138). Some learners may be

so anxious that they become too upset to carry out any learning tasks, like having a normal conversation. Again, trust plays an important role in decreasing the level of anxiety. As Joseph Devito states:

Trusting behavior leads very quickly to a decrease in anxiety. If we have trust in another individual, there is little reason to be anxious. We would feel that we would not lose anything regardless of what we risked. Probably because of this we become more spontaneous. We are apt to lower our defenses, simply because we feel that we will not be hurt; we feel that we will be supported. We feel secure and hence can be ourselves. (407-408)

Therefore, it is important for learners to feel that they are trusted and that they can trust the people in the language learning environment, so that they are more willing to practice using the target language.

Learners who are less afraid and anxious in using the target language will therefore be more willing to interact with others. These types of learners are usually the opposite of the shy, inhibited, and alienated ones; i.e., they are more extroverted and assertive. Not all assertive individuals are extroverts, but extroverted individuals are almost

always assertive. According to Ausubel and Robinson, an extrovert is "an outgoing person whose interests are directed toward people and things in the outer environment" (402). An assertive person is one who, according to Averett and McManis, "feels free to reveal himself through words and actions, can communicate openly and directly with others, has an active orientation to life and attempts to make things happen and strives to make a good try so that he retains his self-respect whether he wins or loses" (1187).

Obviously, these types of individuals are definitely the ones that make better language learners, since they are willing to challenge and to prove to themselves that they are not afraid to make errors from which they can learn. Evidently, extroversion and assertiveness are the more desirable personality traits in second language learning because, as Richard Schmidt explains, the characteristics of extremely extroverted and socially outgoing persons are related to successful second language acquisition: they have high self-esteem, low inhibition, and anxiety; they are highly perceptive of the feelings and thoughts of others, intuitive, and rather impulsive, and are unafraid to make mistakes or to look foolish when they use the second language (142). Language teachers should therefore be able to observe their students

close enough to distinguish the ones that are extroverted and assertive (who need to be tolerated and understood) from the shy, inhibited, and alienated ones (who need to be trusted and encouraged.)

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EMPATHIC CAPACITY

Extroverted and assertive learners are, as stated earlier, highly sensitive to and perceptive of the thoughts and feelings of others. This quality is a characteristic of an empathic learner. Individuals who are more analytical and who can sense and assume the affective and cognitive states of others are thought to have a high level of empathy. Individuals with empathic capacity are also said to have the ability to achieve native-like pronunciation of the target language. Even though empathic capacity is involved in any type of communication, it is more important in oral communication. Guiora et al. define empathy as a process of comprehending in which a person is able to sense the affective and cognitive states of others (44).

In addition, Taylor et al. explain that the independent components of empathic capacity are a cautious style of responding to the emotional expressions of others and the ability to be involved in

emotional experiences of others, whereas the adjunctive components of empathic functioning are the awareness of the affective expression of others and the necessary intelligence for cognitive understanding. They also say that to be empathic is to be able to learn and recall the exact details of the second language (156). Further, Schumann states that "people who are more sensitive in their interactions with others, who are more receptive of subtle cues of behavior and feelings, would have an enhanced capacity to discern those cues and nuances..." (220). And most often, individuals with empathic capacity will avoid responding prematurely in a conversation.

Apparently, individuals with a high level of empathy are more alert to how others communicate and to the intended message that they communicate, perhaps by observing others' body language, tone of voice, etc. And because of this awareness, they will in turn become aware of their own way of communicating. As Taylor et al. point out, "Those individuals who are more aware of feelings are more sensitive to the details and the specific aspects of the second language and reflect this in speaking. Such people tend to extend themselves towards others to understand their feelings, appreciate the details of their behavior, and respond appropriately" (154). Consequently, individuals with a

high level of empathy are able to engage themselves in effective and meaningful communications with others.

Empathic ability has also been said to be responsible for the ability of individuals to achieve native-like pronunciation of the target language. Guiora et al. hypothesize that empathy and pronunciation are directly related to each other, because both are influenced by process of the permeability of ego boundaries (45). Once again, the permeability of ego boundaries play an important role in second language acquisition process. Guiora et al. view pronunciation as "the core of language ego and as the most critical contribution of language ego to self-representation." They say that the permeability of ego boundaries explains why children are able to easily acquire native-like pronunciation, while the rigid ego of adults prevents such ability (46).

However, while Guiora et al. believe that empathic capacity is required in order to achieve native-like pronunciation, Schumann submits that "empathic capacity or ego permeability...is best regarded as an essential factor in the overall ability to acquire a second language rather than simply to acquire an authentic pronunciation" (226). Schumann's idea is indeed valid, because as we know, people with empathic capacity frequently engage themselves in meaningful

conversations, preferably with native speakers of the target language in which they will eventually "pick-up"/acquire the phonology, morphology, and syntax of the second language at a more rapid rate. This is all well and good if the individuals are surrounded by speakers of the target language. Learners who lack the input from and the interaction with native speakers are unlikely to achieve a native-like pronunciation. Therefore, while the "permeability of ego boundaries" may explain why children acquire native-like fluency with more success than adults, "setting" and the factor concerning "input and interaction" may explain why learners learning a second language in an environment that lacks the target language speakers cannot successfully achieve native-like pronunciation.

Even though one is able to make some observations and generalizations about the personality of others, it is difficult to classify individuals into any type of personality. This is because there are many important interacting factors that make up one's personality. Furthermore, through close observation, one will find that people act and react differently from day to day and from one situation to another. Brown points out that people tend to be inconsistent within themselves--they tend to be impulsive, inhibited, and closed-minded in one situation, while a change in time

may produce a complete reversal. He says that the only way to discover one's true personality is to do a systematic observation of the person in a variety of situations (242). However, even though such systematic observation is possible, one will still find that people behave differently in different circumstances. Therefore, we should be able to understand that language teachers can only make broad generalizations about their students' personalities, since their observation of their students' personalities is limited mainly to the classroom environment. However, it will suffice if language teachers can make note of how their students feel, act, and react in a learning environment so that they can help the students cope with their fears and anxieties.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Teachers should be able to let their students understand and accept the differences between the native and the target culture, to be a source of input and interaction for their students, to provide their students with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, by giving them compliments at their attempted/successful tasks and by not embarrassing them in any way, so as to increase their self-esteem and

self-confidence, and to trust and be trusted by their students to allow them to be more willing to communicate their thoughts and feelings. However, the teachers are not the only ones who have to be sensitive and helpful to their students. The students themselves have to work at their own fears and anxiety. Perhaps once their fears and anxieties are minimized or eliminated, they can develop or increase their empathic capacities. Learners themselves are therefore very much responsible for their own progress and level of achievement.

CHAPTER FOUR

POSITIVE VERSUS NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

In Chapter Two, it was mentioned that one's personality is made up of one's ego and of one's "view" of the world--this view is also called attitude. This means that one's attitude is a part of his/her personality. Attitude is another important affective variable, because it causes variation in learners' level of second language proficiencies. It is also important because attitude toward a second language and toward the native speakers of the language can either encourage or inhibit one from learning the second language. Attitude is also responsible for determining if a learner will always feel alienated from both the native and target languages and cultures or if he/she will feel comfortable with his/her bilingualism. Attitude is especially important in second language learning, because it strongly affects one's motivation to learn the language.

This chapter explains the nature of attitude in second language learning and the various strategies that people adopt in handling the differences between the native and the second cultures. However, the discussion in this chapter centers on the fact that one's attitudes are strongly influenced by the attitudes of the society to which one belongs. Thus, the ways in which a society's attitudes are formed are also discussed here. And since negative attitudes prevent success in second language learning, the main focus of the second half of this chapter is on the causes and consequences of negative attitudes and on ways to handle these attitudes.

4.1 DEFINITION OF ATTITUDE

First of all, let's understand the general meaning of attitude itself. In a broad sense, attitude is any type of feeling that one has toward anything or anyone in this world. Like personality, the process of attitude development starts early in one's childhood and is affected by factors such as parents' attitudes, social attitudes, national attitudes, etc. More specifically, Schumann states, "An attitude might be defined as a predisposition to make positive or negative evaluations about people, events, and objects.

The structure of an attitude is characterized by a complex of ideas together with various affective or feelings components. As a result of these affective states, individuals possessing the attitude will be disposed (motivated) either to seek out or to avoid the object of the attitude" (369). In second language learning, attitude is basically the emotional and psychological perceptions and orientations of learners toward all the people and things involved in the learning process. And as Schumann says, attitude is especially important in second language learning, because it strongly affects one's motivation to learn the language. It has been generally observed and agreed by many language teachers and researchers that a positive attitude toward a second language and its culture results in a high level of motivation to learn the second language; this effort and interest would then cause a learner to have a high level of proficiency in the target language. This fact therefore makes attitude one of the most important variables in second language learning, aside from personality and motivation.

4.2 STRATEGIES IN HANDLING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Next, let's examine the things that people

normally do in handling their attitudes toward the differences between the two languages and cultures. Shumann explains that there are three common strategies involved in this process: assimilation, acculturation, and preservation (136). Individuals who adopt the "assimilative" strategy are basically integratively motivated; i.e., they positively value the target culture and want to become part of it. They are also probably unsatisfied with their own culture, or perhaps they are expected to assimilate into the second culture since they have no other choice, in the case of an immigrant, for example. Individuals who adopt the "acculturative" strategy are usually comfortable with and adaptable to both languages and cultures. They feel less alienated from either culture and are sure of themselves and of their positions in both linguistic and cultural environments. Individuals who adopt the "preservation" strategy usually negatively value and reject the target language and the native speakers of that language. This negative feeling normally stems from a lack of understanding of the second culture, which is caused by the differences between the two cultures. It therefore appears that "acculturation" is the most desirable strategy for people to adopt in order to handle their attitudes without much difficulty, because this strategy allows individuals to

have the emotional and psychological stability necessary to learn another language.

Therefore, with a positive attitude toward the second language and the speakers of that language, assimilative and perhaps acculturation strategies are likely to occur. On the other hand, if a society's attitude toward the second language and its native speakers is negative, preservation strategy is most likely to be the choice of the language learners in that society. Naturally, both negative attitude and the adoption of the preservation strategy are going to hinder the ease and success of the language learning.

4.3 A SOCIETY'S ATTITUDE AS AN INFLUENTIAL FACTOR

One's attitudes are strongly influenced by one's social/national attitude (a country's attitude) toward the second language and the society in which the language is spoken. A learner's community may negatively or positively value the target language and its native speakers: a negative attitude inhibits second language learning; a positive attitude promotes it (Schumann 215). For example, many people in the Philippines view English as a useful language, since it is used internationally and is a major medium of instruction throughout the multi-ethnic nation. This

positive attitude is in turn accepted by the people of the country. In contrast, the majority of Malaysian citizens have a negative attitude toward English, since the language comes from Western culture and since British colonialization of Malaysia has led to the feeling of reservation or resentment toward the "white people." This negative "national" attitude would naturally have a great impact on the attitudes of the learners toward the target language and its native speakers, and thus affect the strategy they they would adopt in dealing with the second language and culture.

4.4 THE FORMATION OF A SOCIETY'S ATTITUDES

As mentioned earlier, one's attitudes are strongly influenced by the attitudes of the society to which one belongs. This leads to the question of how a society's attitudes are formed. There are many factors that influence the formation of a society's attitudes, they are commonly based on political, economical, or historical reasons, to name a few. As an example, Imhoof explains that "in some countries attachment to one's native language may be at odds with political and governmental support of a different national language. There may be an attempt by authorities to replace the native language of certain speakers by the national

language for official purposes, or a policy of favouritism towards speakers of the national language over speakers of other languages within the country" (180-181). There may also be disagreements among people in such countries following such governmental decisions; nevertheless, the decision itself implies that the government positively values the national language (e.g., English or whatever it may be), for some logical reason--perhaps due to the usefulness of the language or perhaps the recognized language has the most speakers in the country.

However, such a decision is not always rationally based. As Imhoof says, "It must be recognized, of course, that policies...are not determined simply on the lines of rational analysis; in fact, decisions on language questions are notoriously influenced by emotional issues such as tribal, regional, and religious identification, national rivalries, preservation of elites, and so on" (181). In this case, the influential members of a particular group in a country are therefore responsible for deciding which language should be learned by all citizens in the country as a national or as a second language. In other words, the decision and the society's attitude toward a second or national language are made by and come from the people themselves.

4.5 THE CAUSES OF NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

If a negative attitude toward the second language and culture does indeed exist in a society, one is liable to ask what causes such an attitude to exist, what the effects of such attitudes on the native speakers of the society are, and how such attitudes affect the second language learning itself. There are two reasons why some societies have negative attitudes toward the target language and its native speakers. One of them has to do with history; the other reason is due to "social distance."

One of the causes of the negative attitudes toward a second language and its native speakers is related to history. For instance, even though English is widely spoken all over the world today, in some countries, the resentment toward English-speaking countries still exists. The existence of this negative attitude is the result of many historical events and changes that have led to various negative feelings that are now carried on to the present day. Through history, certain countries in the world have developed a sense of hostility toward or rejection of an international language, especially if the language is native to people who are politically powerful; e.g., a

rejection toward the English language due to British colonialization. It is quite evident that the colonialization of countries by Great Britain has led the people of the colonies to label the British as "pirates" or as the "oppressors." In recognizing this fact, Imhoof points out that, "there may be a certain resentment against the international language if it is thought to be the language of the 'aggressor', 'imperialist', 'colonialist',..." (181).

Negative attitudes toward a second language and its culture are also caused by the differences that exist between the native culture and the second culture. To explain this differences, Schumann introduced and explained the notion of "social distance": the greater the social distance between the two groups, the more difficult it is for the members of the native group to acquire the language of the target group (135). Individuals who are most likely to experience a minimal social distance between the two cultures are those who adopt the assimilative strategy; individuals who experience the maximum social distance are those who adopt the preservation strategy. A reason for this "distance" has to do with whether the two cultures are similar or otherwise. As Schumann says, "Congruence or similarity between the culture of the TL group and that of the 2LL group also affects

social distance. If the two cultures are similar, then integration is facilitated and social distance is reduced" (137). Conversely, if the two cultures are so different and so far apart from one another, integration and assimilation are not likely to occur, and social distance is maximized. The problem of social distance is particularly typical among Eastern cultures (e.g., Japanese culture) and Western cultures (e.g., American culture); both cultures have very little in common, and they are also greatly separated geographically. Because the social distance between one's native culture and the second culture causes difficulty in one's understanding and accepting of the other culture, it is then understandable why some people find it difficult to acknowledge or to accept the importance of the second language, much less to learn the language successfully.

These feelings of resentment and hostility toward a second language and the differences between the two cultures cause the people of a country, for example Malaysia, to resent learning the language and to avoid being associated with the people of the target language. These negative feelings make it very difficult for them to adopt either the assimilative or acculturation strategies. In fact, there is a great possibility that these people are going to be more

patriotic and to have a strong will to preserve the pride and identity of their countries. This means that they would probably adopt the preservation strategy, but as mentioned earlier, this strategy only makes successful language learning difficult or impossible.

4.6 THE EFFECTS OF NEGATIVE ATTITUDES

The effects of such negative feelings toward the English language and toward the English-speaking societies are indeed frightening. The negative attitude toward the target language and the native speakers of the language results in a resentment toward the second language and the second culture, in an unwillingness to acknowledge and accept the second language, and in a greater desire to preserve one's cultural and social identities. This negative attitude can also result in a threat of the spread of the second language, which can result in the rise of "culture conflict."

Many countries in the world today are slowly accepting English as an international language and are therefore encouraging their citizens to learn the language mostly for the purposes of establishing or strengthening international relations between countries or for other utilitarian purposes. Unfortunately, a

second language is not always easily accepted by the citizens of a country, and this resentment thus causes conflicts between the government and the people or between the cultures of the country and the cultures of the second language. People's reluctance to accept a second language stems from the country's decision to use a foreign or an international language as an important language of communication. The use of the second language in a country may lead the citizens of the country to think that their own native language is being neglected and is becoming less important. This then will cause them to resent the second language, and even if they are expected to learn the language anyway, they are not likely to achieve a high level of proficiency.

And then, there is always the possibility of people being threatened and intimidated by the increased importance of a second language in their countries. The spread or the increased importance of the second language, as mentioned before, causes people to worry that their native language is going to fade away or to be neglected. Another reason why people are afraid of the spread of the second language is because they are unsure of their bicultural positions. There is always some kind of adjustment that they have to go through before they actually feel comfortable with both

languages and cultures. Some people are so unsure of their cultural positions and are afraid of what their native group might think of their bilingualism that they would never quite get over that feeling of uncertainty and would always be uncomfortable using the second language, especially in front of their native group.

This fear of language spread is also a reason for the rise of culture conflict. As E.F. O'Doherty points out, "Culture conflict can arise if the learner of a second language feels that his own native culture is threatened by the spread of the second language" (253). Culture conflict is caused partly by the differences and the lack of understanding between the two cultures. And it is explained partly by the fact that people are often prejudiced against any culture that is unlike their own. In certain countries today, for example in Malaysia, the people's fear concerning the spread of English is so intense that it results in the feeling of patriotism among the people in the country and in the re-promoting of the native or national language as a dominant and a more important language. As a result of this, English, which is currently a second language in Malaysia, is slowly becoming a less important language and may soon become a foreign language in that country.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is impossible to separate a language from its native speakers; to understand a language, we have to understand the native speakers of the language. This therefore means that "culture conflict" in second language learning is almost unavoidable but not necessarily intolerable. As O'Doherty says, "It would seem then that culture conflict of some kind is the price one has to pay for the inestimable benefit of genuine bilingualism" (253).

4.7 CONCLUSION

In summary, we can say that attitude is an important affective variable that regulates the filter that allows "input" for language learning progress. A positive attitude allows more "input" to be absorbed from the learning environment, thus allowing a rapid and continuous progress, while negative attitude prevents incoming "input," thus causing a slow and inconsistent progress in the language learning process. A negative attitude is one of the reasons why people experience extreme fear and anxiety while learning a second language. A positive attitude helps one to be more calm and confident while learning the second language and to retain his/her attachment or sense of

belonging to the native language and culture, while a negative attitude causes a threat to one's identity. A negative attitude is caused by historical changes and cultural differences, but a positive attitude can be obtained if one is willing to ignore the pain and agony caused by history and if one is able to understand and accept the cultural differences in this world.

Embedded feelings of resentment and hostility toward another culture and its language result only in the adoption of the "preservation" strategy, which is undesirable in successful second language learning. On the other hand, the readiness to forget such embedded feelings and the willingness to understand one another's cultures promotes "acculturation," which is a more positive strategy in second language learning. Understanding and accepting the differences between cultures will in turn help learners overcome the problem of "social distance" and "culture conflict." More importantly, with a positive attitude, one will be more motivated to learn the second language. Attitude, therefore, is the most important variable of the affective domain, because it controls one's motivation and personality in the language learning process and it determines one's level of second language proficiency.

CHAPTER FIVE

MOTIVATION VERSUS THE RESISTANCE TO LEARN

In the previous chapter, attitude is said to be responsible for either promoting or preventing motivation. Therefore, like personality, motivation is also governed by one's attitude toward the second language and its speakers. As we know, the success at any task is not possible without some amount of drive and interest called motivation, and it is certainly not an exception in successful second language learning. This chapter therefore provides a definition of motivation, explains the importance of motivation in second language learning, and discusses the factors that influence one's motivation to learn a second language. Several views of motivation are also explored here to note that people have their own ideas about motivation. And as the title of this chapter states, the rest of the discussion centers on the opposite of motivation, i.e., the resistance to learn.

5.1 DEFINITION OF MOTIVATION

What is motivation? Basically, it is an inner need or desire that drives a person to take actions in order to fulfill the need or desire. According to Alatis, motivation is "...a force or incentive within a person, that person's needs, ideas, organic state, and emotions" (267). Motivation incites or arouses actions that will lead to the attainment of any goals. In relation to second language acquisition, Alatis considers motivation "...as the process of providing with a motive or motives, the stimulation and maintenance of an inactive interest in foreign language and foreign cultures" (267). The motives lie within an individual, and his/her genuine interest in knowing another language will inevitably lead to all efforts needed to obtain the goal. Maureen O'Brien raised an interesting and true point about motivation in stating that "...in order to stimulate the student's desire to learn, the student himself has to feel that the material is worth knowing...for his future life, beyond the immediate learning situation" (189).

Thus, it all comes back to the individuals, and it is up to them to choose whether or not they want to change their "negative" attitudes and "undesirable" personalities to allow more "input" from the language

learning environment, or whether they prefer to retain them to attain enough "input" for a minimal level of proficiency. The choices that people make are related to which component drive they possess.

Ausubel and Robinson explain that achievement motivation has at least three component drives: 1) "cognitive drive": a completely task-oriented motivation, i.e., the need to know and understand, to master knowledge, and to formulate and solve problems; 2) "ego-enhancement": motivation to achieve status; and 3) "affiliation": motivation to assure approval of a superordinate person or group (347). The first component is purely instrumental, the second is personal, and the third is more social--a need for acceptance. There are two factors that influence these component drives: intrinsic and extrinsic influences (Scovel 130). Some learners may be intrinsically influenced; others may be extrinsically influenced. The intrinsic ones are motivated by factors such as anxiety, the need to achieve, and the goal to have secure self-concepts, while the extrinsically ones are influenced by sociocultural influences and social reinforces. To relate these two influences to the components of motivation, we can say that the learners with the "ego-enhancement" component are influenced intrinsically, while those with the "affiliative"

component are influenced extrinsically.

5.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTIVATION

Motivation determines how well one is going to learn the second language, and it is also said to be more important than high linguistic aptitude. It is also responsible for promoting communication in the target language, especially with the target language speakers.

First of all, it is only common sense that if one works hard at something and strives to achieve his/her goals, one will eventually succeed. This leads Krashen to declare that "motivation is the most important variable in foreign language learning" (68). No one can deny that without motivation there is no effort; without effort there is no success.

Motivation is also said to be more important than linguistic intelligence, because even when a person has a high degree of linguistic aptitude and the chance to use the target in its natural environment, he/she may not achieve a high level of proficiency without motivation. As Eugene Nida states: "...despite the recognized importance of such factors as intelligence, auditory memory, analytical ability, and skill in mimicry, motivation is the one most important factor

involved in a person's learning of a foreign language" (11). Nida's claim is also reinforced by Gardner, et al., who state that "differences in language aptitude result in differences in the extent to which the student can acquire second-language skills dependent upon active instruction, whereas motivational differences influence the extent to which the student acquires skills which can be used in communicational situations" (143). For example, a smart but unmotivated person might score a high mark on a language test but be ineffective in his/her communication, while a person with an average IQ but with a high level of motivation might be more driven to acquire the communicative skills necessary to pick-up the target language's phonology, morphology, and syntax in his/her communications with others.

Motivation is also highly responsible for promoting communication--an act that is required for successful second language learning. However, this does not mean that motivation is needed solely for promoting communication. We have to realize that the more one is motivated to engage in oral communication and comprehension, the more of the target language he/she will naturally acquire, and the higher will be the level of proficiency obtained. Through informal communication, preferably with speakers of the target

language, one is able to increase the amount of input and interaction needed for language acquisition. Therefore, motivation is important, because communication is important. However, it is important not only because it promotes communication but also because it promotes the success of any task. As Nida emphasizes, "A keen desire to learn is fundamental to any real success" (11).

5.3 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE MOTIVATION

Motivation is influenced by many factors which are responsible in either arousing or blocking people's drives or needs. Specifically, learners' motivation is influenced by their parents, their personalities, their attitudes, and by their reasons for learning the second language.

5.3.1 PARENTS

How important are parents' roles in motivating their children to learn a second language? Gardner, among others, believes that their roles are extremely important. Like personality and attitude, individuals' motivation is very much influenced at an early age by their parents. Gardner et al. explain that there are

"active" and "passive" parents (141). Active parents consciously encourage learners to learn and monitor the learners' progress to assure the learner's success, whereas the passive parents' role is more subtle yet more important. Gardner explains, "By the subtle role, I mean the attitudes of the parent toward the community whose language the child is learning. These attitudes are important, I believe, because they influence the child's attitudes toward the other language community..." (141). Their attitudes therefore influence their children's motivation to acquire the second language.

Does this mean that all "active" parents have a negative attitude and all "passive" parents have a positive attitude toward the second language and culture? And does it also mean that learners' motivation is dependent upon the "activeness" or "passiveness" of their parents? Not exactly! For example, parents who view learning a second language as a waste of time or as an act of weakening one's bond to the native language and culture can either passively or actively motivate the learners to learn in order for them to get a good grade on their language tests. But the learner will be able to sense the negative attitude of the parents, and as a result will be motivated simply for the sake of making good grades rather than

to actually "know" the target language. On the other hand, parents who think that learning a second language is positive and desirable will subconsciously, or better yet, openly make the learners realize the importance of learning the language, and as a result would motivate the learners to really learn and know the language. Therefore, the degree of motivation possessed by the learners is not dependent upon the "active" or "passive" acts of the parents, but instead, it depends on the attitudes of the parents (even though active parents are more aware of the learners' progress and exhibit their concern for their children's learning progress and performance.) The point is that parents' positive attitudes lead to learners' higher level of motivation, whereas parents' negative attitudes decrease their children's level of motivation.

5.3.2 PERSONALITY

Next, one might ask how personality fits into the realm of motivation. Krashen believes that personality factors are interrelated with motivational variables (23). As explained in Chapter Three, extroversion and assertiveness are personality traits that allow individuals to be more effective in their communication, and as a result motivate them to engage

in more communication in the target language. Krashen explains that it is hypothesized that "the self-confident or secure person will be more able to encourage intake and will also have a lower [affective] filter and that traits relating to self-confidence (lack of anxiety, outgoing personality, self-esteem) are thus predicted to relate to second language acquisition" (23). Students who feel comfortable in the classroom and who like the teacher are more willing to volunteer in order to seek out intake and to accept the teacher as a source of intake or input (Krashen 23).

Another personality trait that is interrelated with motivational factors has to do with the "analytical orientation" of learners. Krashen suggests that individuals with an "analytic orientation" are more likely to show conscious learning and a more favourable attitude towards the language learning context, which in turn would increase their level of motivation (24). Krashen notes that persons with an analytic orientation are usually more open to new concepts and ideas, for they are more open-minded. Krashen's concept of "analytic orientation" and its relation to the attitudinal/motivational variables explains the differences in individuals' affective states, which in turn affect the level of "input" that

they obtain from the environment (his Affective Filter Hypothesis.)

In addition, John B. Carroll states that "there is a subtle aspect of motivation which seems to be related to personality" (4), and agrees with Krashen that positive attitude, self-esteem and self-confidence are related to learners' motivation. According to Carroll, "The most successful language learners tend to be those who enthusiastically look forward to communicating with speakers of the second language and expect to like it, or are least to find interest in their ideas, experiences, attitudes, and customs. Open, outgoing, friendly people are more likely to have this kind of motivation than persons who have closed minds and rely on their own ideas and ways of doing things" (4). In other words, individuals who are generally more extroverted and assertive are more likely to be highly motivated than shy, inhibited, and alienated ones.

Unfortunately, this is not always true. Nida warns us that one should not confuse the motivation to communicate with an extroverted personality, because he says, "Such terms as extrovert and introvert are in themselves misleading, because they imply too simple a classification of types" (13). This similar warning has also been stated by Brown (in Chapter Three), who says that it is "difficult to type individuals and to

classify groups of individuals together" (242). Nida warns us that "we cannot assume that a person who exhibits predominantly those characteristics generally regarded as typical of extroverts will necessarily be prompted by any great urge to learn a foreign language, even though he finds himself in a foreign language area" (13). As Brown says, individuals tend to be inconsistent within themselves from one situation or environment to another. In Nida's words, "Not infrequently the out-going personality who is the 'life of the party' at home becomes a retiring, hesitant person abroad. Moreover, the 'timid soul' who seems entirely wrapped up within the orbit of his own personality may become a 'roaring lion' in a foreign country" (13).

People have also often equated talkativeness with the motivation to communicate. Even though to a certain extent there is a significant correlation, not every talkative person has the motivation to communicate; some people are talkative as a way of hiding their inferiority complex. Nida observes that "some people who are excessively talkative in their mother tongue become extremely retiring and quiet in a foreign language context" (12). Accordingly, we cannot assume that individuals with an extroverted personality will be highly motivated to communicate in a language

classroom just because they are talkative and outgoing in other situations and environments. Extroverted people who are quiet in a second language environment perhaps have a negative attitude toward the second language and the speakers of the language, which blocks or prevents the motivation needed to learn the language.

Nevertheless, the main point is that we cannot afford to take for granted that all extroverts have high motivation to communicate in a second language environment. This also implies that it is important to remember that since personality is related to one's attitudinal/motivational factors in second language learning, one cannot afford to discuss the importance of personality separately without taking into consideration the other two factors. As Lalonde and Gardner point out, "Hypothesizing personality traits to be directly related to second language achievement may lead researchers to obtain less than encouraging results, and as a consequence, the role of such variables may be underestimated. When these traits are examined along with other variables relevant to the learning process (i.e., attitudes and motivation), encouraging results are obtained" (235).

5.3.3 A SOCIETY'S ATTITUDES

Aside from the influences of parents and personality, one's motivation is also affected by his/her attitudes toward the second language and its speakers. But as mentioned before, one's attitudes are strongly influenced by the society's attitudes in which one belongs. As Lalonde and Gardner state, "...social attitudes are relevant to second language acquisition primarily because they serve as motivational supports" (235). But how important are social attitudes on motivation to learn a second language? Richard Clement believes that it is quite important and notes that Bourhis et al. in Language, Ethnicity, and Intergroup Relations, (London Academy Press, 1971,) introduce the concept of "ethnolinguistic vitality"-- a concept they defined in terms of the social status of the language, the distribution of its speakers (demographically), and its institutional support, i.e., if it is used in school, media, etc. (254).

"Ethnolinguistic vitality" determines the importance, status, and the usefulness of a particular language in a multi-ethnic society, depending upon the attitudes of the members of the society toward the language. They claim that the "ethnolinguistic vitality" of a language within a community influences

the attitude and motivation of learners in the community, thus influencing the level of proficiency they eventually attain" (Clement 254). For example, if members of a multi-ethnic society believe that English is spoken by most people in the society and is very much institutionalized, the society's motivation to learn English will be great. However, they imply that "ethnolinguistic vitality" is found only in a society that contains various ethnic groups, when many countries in the world today are using English as a second or foreign language.

Gardner et al. believe that one's social/cultural attitude is very important in affecting the nature of one's motivation. They explain that the attitudes of one's society affect the development of attitudinal/motivational characteristics of motivation, the potential relationship between the "instrumental" and "integrative" motivations, and the relationship between aptitude and achievement (200). They state: "If the cultural milieu is such that all students are expected to learn a second language, then a major determinant of student's level of achievement would be his cognitive skills. If, on the other hand, second language acquisition is not expected then one might hypothesize that motivational differences might moderate the relative contribution of language

aptitude" (200). In other words, if a society values a second language and its speakers, this positive attitude will be transmitted to the members of that society and vice-versa.

5.3.4 REASONS FOR LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE

Other factors may also influence one's motivation to learn, such as the reasons--the ultimate goals and benefits--for learning the second language. For instance, if person A thinks that learning and knowing the language is highly important and that it will increase his/her self-esteem and social status, chances are, the person will be very much interested and driven to achieve success. Conversely, person B may view the learning of the second as just a requirement for him to do certain things, such as to pass the second language tests at school, to read literature written in the target language, or to understand movies or television shows produced in the target language, and as a result, person B may not be as highly motivated as person A, who will most likely achieve a higher level of proficiency in the target language than person B. Examples such as this influence Gardner and Lambert's views on motivation.

5.4 VIEWS ON MOTIVATION

Gardner and Lambert have distinguished two types of motivation: "integrative" motivation and "instrumental" motivation. They define "instrumental" motivation as the desire to achieve various utilitarian goals, and "integrative" motivation as the desire to integrate and become part of the target language community (102). Interestingly, they include the effect of attitude on both types of motivation, thereby emphasizing the point that we cannot discuss motivation without touching upon attitude. Another view of motivation, however, deemphasizes the importance of the two-way classification made by Gardner and Lambert. According to Mary Finocchiaro, motivation is affected by the way language teachers respond to the cognitive and affective needs of the learners. She believes that the amount of motivation that a learner has depends upon how well language teachers understand the emotional and psychological states of learners. John Macnamara, on the other hand, has a more practical and straightforward approach. He does not think that classification of motivation is necessary and believes that motivation to communicate is more important than the desire to be part of the target culture or any other long range goal. His belief, therefore, supports

the basic idea stated earlier: the desire to communicate is the most fundamental and important kind of motivation in second language acquisition. All these views on motivation have to be taken into consideration before one knows how to increase language learners' degree of motivation to allow them to achieve a high level of proficiency in the target language.

Michael Strong explains that instrumentally motivated learners have limited or no signs of interest in the people whose language they are learning, but they intend to use the second language to achieve personal satisfaction, social recognition or economic advantages (1-2). To explain this lack of interest in the second language speakers, Krashen states, "The problem with instrumental motivation is the fact that when people study a foreign language for clearly defined purposes, there is seldom very much interest in the language itself, and it is difficult to separate the language from other goals. If language learning is supposed to be the medium for reaching goals, although there are some alternative routes, no proper language learning will take place" (65). These claims imply that instrumental motivation is less desirable and less important for second language learning, for it causes a low level of achievement in the target language.

According to Gardner and Lambert, integrative

motivation involves one's identification, inquisitiveness, and sincere interest in the other group. They believe that integrative motivation is more important than instrumental motivation, because integratively motivated learners usually achieve a higher level of proficiency in the target language than those with instrumental motives. They also say that integrative motivation is more important because it "encourages frequent contact with members of the other ethnic group and facilitates an individual's use of the language. If the other group is available for contact in the immediate environment and if such experiences are pleasant, it is likely that the individual will develop the feeling of self-confidence with the language. According to this interpretation, whether the individual will actually interact with members of the second language speaking group when given the opportunity, and thus become more self-confident, is dependent upon an integrative motive" (299).

It seems that Gardner et al. put the emphasis on the fact that motivation to communicate in the target language is dependent upon the learners' desire to integrate into the second society. Yet it is possible that the social setting in which the learning takes place plays an important part as well. For instance, if a learner learns a second language in a country

where the groups of the second language speakers are not present, chances are, his/her motivation to learn the second language is instrumental in nature. And if a person (e.g., an immigrant) learns a second language in a natural/target language environment where the second language community is present, his/her motivation will most likely be integrative in nature. Therefore, instead of saying that one's motivation is dependent upon the attitudes and upon the ultimate goals to be obtained from learning the language, we can say that the goals or reasons themselves are first influenced by the language learning "settings" or environments.

The fact that motivation to learn is also dependent upon the social setting/environment and that instrumentally motivated learners can indeed achieve a high level of proficiency has been proven by Yasmeen Lukmani. She studied a group of Marathi students in Bombay to find out if they were instrumentally or integratively motivated to learn English as a second language. Her findings show that integrativeness alone does not necessarily lead to high achievement in English and disclaim the fact that integrative motivation is better or a more important type of motivation than instrumental motivation.

The results of her study show that the degree and

type of motivation of the Marathi students have to do with the environment or setting in which the learning takes place. Lukmani says that despite the fact that the students consider the English-speaking community to be more successful, more modern, more independent, and more cultured, they did not show any desire to integrate into that community. All they wanted was to obtain the better condition of living associated with that community yet still retain their sense of belonging to their own community. This implies that the Marathi students have a sense of loyalty to their own native language and culture. This also indicates that "English proficiency arises from a desire to use English not as a means of entry into a reference group, but as a tool with which to understand and cope with the demands of modern life" (Lukmani 271). This suggests that the hope to achieve the status and the modern ideas and life-styles associated with the second-language speakers' group is one of the characteristics of the instrumental motivation.

Yet another opinion about motivation comes from Finocchiaro, who believes that "contrary to the popular misconceptions, motivation is not either intrinsic nor extrinsic or instrumental or integrative" (59). Unlike Gardner and Lambert, Finocchiaro is more concerned about the way and the amount of motivation fostered in

a language environment. She says that motivation does not depend solely on learners' aptitude, personality, or learning strategies but stems from the positive attitudes of learners and teachers. Finocchiaro suggests that it is more important to concentrate on the study of learner-teacher relationship and the community in which they live and in which the learning takes place in order to discover the types of motivation involved and the most suitable ways in which the learners can be motivated. She considers motivation as part of the understanding of learners' feelings, aspirations, spiritual and creative needs, as well as the "world" that they bring into the language learning environment. Learners need to understand that their cultures and identities are appreciated by their teachers and that whatever belongs to them (pride, sense of belonging, etc.) is not going to be taken away from them. Finocchiaro emphasizes that the teachers' responsibility is to motivate the learners to be open enough to accept and to "add" another language to their abilities and to appreciate other cultures in the world (60). She also suggests that before teachers can help their students to understand and to appreciate other cultures and languages, it is important for them to recognize and reinforce learners' sense of identity by providing them with pride in their own language and

culture (65).

Finocchiaro's ideas and suggestions seem more practical and applicable in motivating students to learn a second language. She is more concerned about establishing trust, respect, and understanding between learners and teachers and their cultures during the whole process of language learning. When the learners trust themselves, understand the target culture, have a sense of pride in their own language and culture, and are genuinely interested in "adding" another language to their abilities, Finocchiaro believes that motivation will take care of itself. By carefully establishing the fact that learning a second language can be fun, safe, and unthreatening, students will consequently be more motivated to learn.

Another view on motivation that also disregards the importance of "integrative" and "instrumental" motivations is suggested by Macnamara (quoted by Oller and Richards) believes that "the need to communicate information may be a more powerful motivator than the desire to become part of another culture or any other long-range goals" (55). And the explanation for the importance of motivation to communicate has already been explained earlier in this chapter. Joan Rubin supports Macnamara's view; however, she says that even though the need to communicate is a powerful motivator,

the classroom is not a suitable place to learn a language (43). Thus Rubin quotes Macnamara as stating that "a problem with the classroom is that the student seldom has anything so urgent to say to the teacher that they will improvise with whatever communicative skills they possess to get their meanings across" (43). This implies that motivation to communicate is difficult to promote in a classroom, but it is important to note that the good language learners usually have a high motivation to communicate regardless of where they are (Rubin 43).

Macnamara's view on motivation, therefore, emphasizes the fact that in order to get students to use the target language, they have to be in an environment that requires them to use the language. The problem with communication arises when the target language is not widely used outside the classroom, a situation which prevents even the most highly motivated learners from speaking the target language. In other words, the opportunity is not there! Macnamara's concern indicates that those learning a second language in a "non-natural" environment are less motivated due to the lack of or limited opportunity to speak the target language, thus making them less proficient than learners learning in a natural/target environment. As O'Brien says, "Without the opportunity to use a

language, the motivation to learn it would soon disappear" (192).

5.5 THE RESISTANCE TO LEARNING

The opposite of motivation, or in Alatis's words "the urge to communicate," is the resistance to learn (266). This resistance acts as a wall that blocks motivation. There are three types of resistance to the learning of a second language: "lathophobic aphasia," "anomie," and "ethnocentrism." Alatis explains that "Lathophobic aphasia" is "an unwillingness to speak for fear of making a mistake", whereas "anomie" is the feeling of uncertainty or dissatisfaction with one's own identity or society (266-269). The term "ethnocentrism" is defined as the resistance of individuals to be sensitive to second language speakers and to the structure and rules of the target language (Nida 14).

"Lathophobic aphasia" is usually suffered by shy, inhibited, and alienated individuals who have very low self-esteem and who are so unsure of themselves that they are afraid to communicate their thoughts and feelings to others. Anomie is "a state of lawlessness, a condition in an individual commonly characterized by personal disorientation, anxiety, and social isolation"

(Alatis 268). For instance, a person may have a resentment against his own "foreignness," and this feeling will lead to the emotional resistance against the learning of the second language (Alatis 269). As a person slowly assimilates into the target group, he/she experiences the feeling of fear as he/she enters the second culture and the feeling of regret as he/she slowly loses ties from the native group (Lambert et al. 358). Learners' motivation to learn the target language will decrease as a result of the feelings of fear and regret. Thus, "anomie" is certainly not a contributing factor to the language learning process because of its harmful effects upon the psychological equilibrium of learners (Cem Alptekin 278).

However, it is said that integratively motivated learners are usually not affected by "anomie," because they positively value the target group and are willing to modify and adapt their attitudes so that they can be part of that group (Alptekin 278). But, the problem arises when some integratively motivated learners fail to integrate themselves into the target group because they feel uncertain and isolated; they are not sure in which group they should belong. In this case, "anomie" is responsible for blocking or stunting their effort to assimilate into the target group.

The next type of resistance is "ethnocentrism."

To explain this resistance, Nida says that "...those who have been apparently strongly activated by such an urge [to communicate] have not infrequently failed to learn a foreign language adequately. The trouble seems to lie in the fact that they have not been sufficiently sensitive to the out-group" (14). The out-group that Nida refers to here is the target language speakers. "Ethnocentrism" causes individuals to be sensitive to what people in their native culture would think instead of what the target language speakers think of the way the learners understand and use the target language. Nida says that these types of individuals will usually end up 'butchering the language', i.e., the target language" (14). Individuals who suffer from "ethnocentrism" have the "who-cares-about-grammar" attitude, and they will continue using "broken" second language as long as they can communicate using that language. Because of this insensitivity to the target language speakers' comment over the learners' total disregard for the structure and rules of the target language, individuals will never be motivated to learn the "proper" second language and will therefore never learn the target language adequately.

5.6 CONCLUSION

It is common knowledge that motivation is the key to success at any kind of task, and it is certainly not an exception in second language learning. As discussed here, many explanations have been provided by researchers concerning the nature and the influential factors of motivation in the second language learning process. Second language researchers have also been aware of and have provided some explanations concerning the reasons behind learners' resistance to learn a second language. All the views on motivation that are discussed here are of equal importance in explaining the significance of motivation in second language learning. These views help second language teachers to examine the ultimate goals of their students for learning the language and thus guide them to find the most suitable ways to motivate their students.

Another important reminder is that there are many interacting factors, specifically personality and attitude, that have to be taken into consideration when one examines the importance of and the problems with motivation. Motivation cannot be fully understood without a knowledge of one's personality and attitude toward the second language and culture. More importantly, motivation has to stem from within

oneself--the learners themselves have to have the genuine interest and drive to acquire the second language successfully. And to arouse this interest and drive, learners themselves have to view the knowledge of a second language to be useful long after a language course is completed. The most important point is that motivation, in any type or form or for any reasons or goals, is responsible in the variation in the level of second language proficiency achieved by second language learners. Krashen's claim that motivation is the most important variable in language learning has been supported here and by many other language researchers. It is indeed true that "an ounce of motivation is worth a ton of pedagogy" (Alatis 266).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

POSITIVE ATTITUDES: THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The study of the affective variables--personality, attitude, and motivation--is indeed very important, for it clearly explains why some language learners are more successful at acquiring a second language than others. Through the years, researchers have been analyzing and formulating various hypotheses concerning the process of second language acquisition, and they have been developing a myriad of second language teaching methods. While the many hypotheses and teaching methods explain the "how" and the "what" of second language acquisition, understanding affective variables explains "why" some language learners attain a higher level of second language proficiency than others.

This study emphasizes that learning a second language can be a demanding and stressful process and that learners need to have strong yet permeable egos to

withstand the threats, fears, and anxieties that are part of the process. This study shows that assertive and extroverted learners are better language learners than shy, inhibited, and alienated ones, because they have strong self-concept and have a high level of empathic capacity. It has also been pointed out that learners' personalities are governed by their attitudes toward the target language and its speakers and are influenced by the social and cultural environments in which they live.

Learners' attitudes toward the second language and its speakers control both their personality and motivation, and their attitudes are influenced mainly by the attitudes of the society to which they belong. Learners' negative attitudes stem from the feeling of resentment toward the speakers of the target language due to historical reasons and also from "social distance"--the differences between the native and the target cultures. Negative attitudes cause learners' unwillingness to learn the target language and to be associated with the second culture. Negative attitudes also lead to some form of "culture conflict" that is caused by their fear of the spread of the second language.

This study further indicates that learners who are highly motivated to learn a second language are

those who positively value the second language and those who are interested to learn more about the target culture. Learners' motivations are influenced by their parents, personalities, attitudes, and by their reasons for learning the second language. Those who are not motivated are usually afraid of making mistakes, are unsure about their bilingual positions, and do not care if they really use the correct forms and structures of the second language.

It has been emphasized here that personality, attitude, and motivation cannot be discussed separately because these variables are interrelated to one another. However, this research concludes that attitude is the most important affective variable, because evidently attitude governs both the motivation and personality of learners. Even though Krashen claims that motivation is the most important variable in language learning, it has been proven here that motivation itself is tremendously controlled by one's attitudes. The fact is that negative attitudes lead to undesirable personality traits and to little or no motivation. Thus, without positive attitudes, there is not real success.

6.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following suggestions concerning motivation come from Christopher Ely (1986). Firstly, it would be interesting to find out if integrative motivation underlies apparent instrumentality, i.e., if the desire to be a member of the target culture is a part of the interests in future occupational uses of the language. Secondly, if it is possible that a reason for language learning is unrelated to neither integrative nor instrumental orientations, would it be possible that other "types" of motivation are involved? Further research to find out if there are indeed other "types" of motivation is also suggested. Another possible topic of research would be to determine the "strength" of learners' motivation, that is if such measure is indeed possible (28).

Another possible area for further research is concerned with learners' attitudes--specifically the negative attitudes that have been caused by British colonialization. Is it at all possible to eliminate such negative embedded feelings of people in the countries that have been colonized? If it is possible, how can it be done? If it is not possible, how can it be at least minimized? This can be an interesting and fruitful area of research--one that has been the main

concern of this writer.

Whatever future research may discover, the fact remains that learners' personality, attitude, and motivation are the affective variables that explain why some second language learners are more successful than others at acquiring a second language.

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